

Montana Department of Livestock

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DOL Reminds Livestock Producers of Disaster Aid Deadlines

The Montana Department of Livestock is reminding livestock producers across the state that they could qualify for low-interest loans and other federal assistance after federally declared disaster designations.

"Ranching and raising livestock is a tough business even in the best of conditions," said Christian Mackay, executive officer for the Montana Board of Livestock. "With a prolonged drought and everything from fires to floods and blizzards, it has been especially challenging for our ranchers the past couple of years."

The Department of Livestock, Mackay said, wants to make sure Montana's livestock producers are aware of any assistance programs that may exist.

A variety of declarations have been issued for production losses suffered the past two years, with two new declarations issued since early October.

In November, the USDA declared disaster designation for Lewis & Clark, Broadwater, Cascade, Flathead, Jefferson, Meagher, Powell and Teton counties. Livestock and other agricultural producers who can show a 35 percent loss due to drought and are unable to obtain credit elsewhere are eligible for low interest loans through the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). The application deadline is July 7, 2008.

The eight-county area produces about 15 percent of the state's cattle, Mackay said.

In October, Valley County was declared a disaster, and ranch and farm producers there and in contiguous counties – Daniels, Garfield, McCone, Phillips and Roosevelt -- qualify for natural disaster assistance.

State-wide, programs that are likely to be of most interest to livestock producers include the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), both of which are administered by the FSA.

LCP compensates livestock producers for feed losses that occurred between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007 due to natural disaster. The program includes losses resulting from blizzards that occurred in late 2006 and early 2007, and grazing losses suffered in 2007 attributable to wildlife. LIP compensates livestock producers for actual livestock losses between January 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007, that resulted from natural disasters. Sign-ups for both programs began September 10, and no application deadline has yet been set.

Eligible producers may receive a maximum of \$80,000 in LCP or LIP benefits, and must choose only one year for which they wish to receive benefits in either program.

Sign-ups for the Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP-III), which compensates dairy producers for production losses resulting from a variety of adverse weather conditions that occurred between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, begins December 3 at local USDA Service Centers. The program compensates producers for production losses that resulted from lost herds, milk that had to be dumped when dairy plants closed, and power outages, fuel shortages and infrastructure damage that temporarily interrupted the flow of dairy products to markets.

In addition to those programs, the application deadline for an emergency livestock assistance program funded by the USDA and administered by the Montana Department of Agriculture expires November 28. That program, announced in June, awards grants of up to \$10,000 to eligible producers who experienced forage production losses due to drought. Eligible counties include Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, and Rosebud. For additional information, contact Andy Gray, Montana Department of Agriculture, at 406/444-3730.

Livestock producers needing additional information on disaster assistance should:

- Contact their local USDA Service Center (a map of Montana's USDA Service Centers is available at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?service=page/CountyMap&state=MT&stateName=Montana&stateCode=30>);
- See the Montana Farm Service Agency web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=mt&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>;
- See the USDA-FSA's Disaster Assistance Programs web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=landing>;
- See the FSA's Disaster Assistance Program brochure at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/2007_disaster.pdf;
- See the FSA's Livestock Compensation Program fact sheet at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lcp07.pdf
- See the Governor's Drought Advisory Committee web site at www.drought.mt.

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Federally Declared Disaster Counties, 2005-2006

The following counties qualify for disaster aid such as the LCP and LIP programs.

County	2005	2006	County	2005	2006
Beaverhead	No	No	Madison	No	No
Big Horn	No	Yes	Meagher	No	Yes
Blaine	Yes	Yes	Mineral	No	No
Broadwater	No	Yes	Missoula	No	No
Carbon	No	Yes	Musselshell	Yes	Yes
Carter	Yes	Yes	Park	No	Yes
Cascade	No	Yes	Petroleum	Yes	Yes
Chouteau	Yes	Yes	Phillips	Yes	Yes
Custer	No	Yes	Pondera	No	Yes
Daniels	No	Yes	Powder River	Yes	Yes
Dawson	No	Yes	Powell	No	No
Deer Lodge	No	No	Prairie	No	Yes
Fallon	Yes	Yes	Ravalli	No	No
Fergus	Yes	Yes	Richland	Yes	Yes
Flathead	No	Yes	Roosevelt	Yes	Yes
Gallatin	No	Yes	Rosebud	No	Yes
Garfield	No	Yes	Sanders	No	No
Glacier	No	Yes	Sheridan	Yes	Yes
Golden Valley	Yes	Yes	Silver Bow	No	No
Granite	No	No	Stillwater	No	Yes
Hill	Yes	Yes	Sweet Grass	No	Yes
Jefferson	No	Yes	Teton	No	No
Judith Basin	Yes	No	Toole	No	No
Lake	No	No	Treasure	No	Yes
Lewis & Clark	No	Yes	Valley	No	Yes
Liberty	Yes	Yes	Wheatland	Yes	Yes
Lincoln	No	No	Wibaux	Yes	Yes
McCone	No	Yes	Yellowstone	No	Yes